**TCORE 103 Introduction to Social Sciences: Civics in Action**

***“A democracy thrives when its citizens vote, show up for jury duty, engage in public life, join neighborhood groups, are aware of current civic issues, listen to viewpoints other than their own, attend local government meetings, and voice their concerns to lawmakers.”***

**Civic Learning Institute**

Fall 2018

Instructor: Katie Baird

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Meeting Times: MW 1:30-3:30

Class Location: TLB 115

**Course Description**

America was founded on the ideal of self-government, an aspiration that unifies us as Americans. But for self-government to work effectively, citizens must understand and participate in their representative government, and the democratic processes surrounding it. To do this effectively, one must at a minimum know how their government works, and then how to best influence it.

Like most courses in civics, this one will strengthen your appreciation for the importance of good citizenship, and develop your understanding of what that means. It is also *different* from most civics courses because it pursues these goals through investigating the roles and responsibilities of our local governments. I do this in part because our civic engagement is possibly most influential at the local level. Yet local government is often the least well understood unit of our government. While we probably all know how to write a letter to the President of the United States to weigh in on a foreign war or income taxes, we often aren’t exactly sure how to voice our opinion on school policy, who to contact about getting a street light placed on their street or getting the speed limit in our neighborhood reduced. Under our deliberative democracy, political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussions and debate among the public. But to participate as citizens, we first must understand our local government, and also know about the opportunities we have in shaping officials’ decisions.

The course is also different from other civic courses in that it requires you assume active roles as citizens. You’ll do this by identifying public concerns you or others you know have, and then you’ll try to solve or address these by engaging in the political process.

**Learning Outcomes**

This course strives to ensure that you:

\*understand the institutions of local government and their roles and responsibilities

\*understand the importance of citizen voice in government

\*recognize the different ways citizens can participate in and influence their local government

\*pay attention to and become more active in your local government

**Readings**

A majority of your readings will come from two sources.

* **League of Women Voters (2018). *The State We’re In: Washington*. 8th edition.**
* **Lundin, Steve (2007). *The Closest Government to the People: A Complete Reference Guide to Local Government in Washington State*. Pullman: Board of Regents of Washington State University.**

A pdf version of the LWV book is posted on canvas. A copy of Lundin’s book is on reserve at the library’s circulation desk (Second floor TLB); you can check it out for a couple of hours at a time. Alternatively, you can find an online copy of the book on the library’s website. If you go this route, simply download a copy onto your hard drive, then read the relevant chapters. I’ve also posted a pdf version of the *entire* book on canvas, but you may prefer to just work with the chapters you’ll be reading (the book is very large).

**Course Mechanics, Assignments and Grading**

This course requires your close and timely reading of the material assigned, and your active participation during class time. Several class sessions will be held off campus, which I realize may create some logistical problems for some of you. I will do my best to help you with those logistics, so do alert me to them as soon as possible.

In terms of assignments and grades, you’ll be responsible for completing the following assignments and activities:

* In class participation, which means actively participating during class time, and making sure you come to class having read that day’s reading assignments (10 percent of grade)
* Two one-hour quizzes (25 percent of grade): Oct 17 and Nov 14th.
* Write-up on two meetings of a government body (15 percent of grade). Due Oct 31 and Nov 28. See separate sheet for instructions
* Participation in Canvas Discussion Board (10 percent). Posts periodic throughout quarter, and must be timely.
* Blog: Addressing or Solving a Local Problem of Public Policy (20 percent). See separate sheet for instructions. Due Oct 8, 29th, and Nov 21.

* Poster Board Assignment (15 percent). Due Dec 7th. See separate sheet for instructions.
* *Letter to the Editor* or Letter to Official: 5 percent of grade. Due December 3.

[**Plagiarism & Academic Honesty**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/38211)

A significant part of your experience at UW Tacoma will entail reading, synthesizing, and using the knowledge and ideas of others. To plagiarize is to use the ideas––or unique phrasing of those ideas––without acknowledging that they originate from someone or someplace other than you. Attributing where you get your information builds your own authority to speak on that topic and provides valuable backing to the arguments you make. Plagiarism is a violation of UW’s student conduct code, and the consequences can be serious. Though citing, quoting, and paraphrasing can be confusing at first, it is essential that you familiarize yourself with these essentials of academic writing. If you have questions about what amounts to plagiarism, you are strongly encouraged to seek guidance from faculty and the Teaching and Learning Center. I like [this short handout](https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/sites/default/files/global/documents/library/plagiarism.pdf) from the TLC on plagiarism.  

[**Inclement Weather**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/node/39650)

If in doubt about whether campus will close due to bad weather (or any other event), check the UWT Home Page, as official campus closures or delays are announced there first. I’ll post anything, too, on Canvas regarding assignments and expectations during a closure. If you haven’t already, you can also sign up for UW Alert here: [washington.edu/safety/alert/](http://www.washington.edu/safety/alert/)

**Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices (including, but not limited to, cell phones, tablets and laptops) may only be used in the classroom when pertinent to the class. Activities not relevant to the course, such as checking/ sending email, playing games and surfing the web, are both disruptive and disrespectful of others in the classroom.  

[**Library**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/library/library)

The UW Tacoma Library provides services and tools to support students at all levels of expertise. You can:

* check out books and videos,
* [borrow technology](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/learning-research-commons/equipment-available-students-larc), including laptops, graphing and scientific calculators, cables, phone chargers, headphones, and more,
* check out many [required textbooks](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/textbook-support),
* [book rooms for group study](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/learning-research-commons/reserve-group-study-room), and
* do [3D printing](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/learning-research-commons/reserve-group-study-room), and more.

Scheduled or drop-in library help is available. Visit their website at [www.tacoma.washington.edu/library](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/library/library) or visit them in person in the Snoqualmie (SNO) or Tioga Library Buildings (TLB).

[**Teaching and Learning Center**](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-center/teaching-learning-center)

The Teaching and Learning Center offers free academic support for students at all levels. You’ll find there one-on-one consultations and group workshops in writing, math, economics, statistics, science, and Spanish. They are super with addressing questions you might have about English grammar & vocabulary, reading, and learning strategies. They are located on the 2nd floor of the Snoqualmie building (Snoqualmie 260) and online. Schedules an appointment, or visit during drop-in hours by visiting their website at [tacoma.uw.edu/tlc](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc).

* + Personal and family support services. UWT provides many services to help you with your personal or family life. Visit [this website](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/faculty-assembly/syllabi-service-statements)  for more information.

**Class Schedule**

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| * + **Date** | * + **Topic** | * + **Readings** | * + **Due** |
| * + **I. INTRO AND OVERVIEW** | | |  |
| * + 26-Sep | * + Introduction | * + \*Bellamy. "What is Citizenship and Why Does it Matter?" |  |
|  |  | * + \*Levine. "What is Civic Engagement?" |  |
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| * + 1-Oct | * + NOTE: first half of class to be held in a computer lab | * + \*Levine. "Why Do We Need Broad Civic Engagement?" |  |
|  |  | * + \*AACU (2011). "[Civic Engagement and Psychosocial Well Being](https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/civic-engagement-and-psychosocial-well-being-college-students)," Liberal Education 97(2). |  |
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| * + **II. AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND CITIZENSHIP** | | |  |
| * + 3-Oct | * + History | * + \* | * + Canvas   + Discussion |
|  |  | * + \**Government Closest to the People*, read chapters 1 and 2. |  |
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| * + 8-Oct | * + Origins of our Government | * + *\*The State We're In*. Read chapters 3-4 | * + Blog: Part 1   + Due |
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| * + 10-Oct | * + Washington State Government | * + \**The State We're In*. Read Chapters 5, 7 and 9. |  |
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| * + 15-Oct | * + Tribal Government | * + \*National Congress of American Indians. 2015. “[Tribal Nations and the United States: An Introduction](http://www.ncai.org/attachments/PolicyPaper_VmQazPEqbvZDMeaDvbupWTSZLmzyzBKOknQRXnUyoVMoyFkEWGH_Tribal%20Nations%20and%20the%20United%20States_An%20Introduction.pdf),” read pp 6-33. | * + Canvas   + Discussion |
| * + 17-Oct | * + Quiz |  | * + Quiz |
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| * + **III. YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT** |  |  |  |
| * + 22-Oct | * + County | * + \**The Government Closest to the People*, read pages 40-74 and 81-109. | * + Canvas   + Discussion |
| * + 24-Oct | * + County | * + Cynthia Stewart, League of Women Voters   + \*Readings TBA |  |
| * + 29-Oct | * + Cities | * + \* *The Government Closest to the People*, read pages 137-161, and 195-205. | * + Blog Part   + 2 Due |
|  |  | * + \*Watch [the following set of videos](https://wacities.org/about-us/our-281-cities-and-towns/cities-101-videos), which collectively take about 10 minutes. |  |
| * + 31-Oct | * + Cities | * + \* Readings TBA | * + First Mtg   + Report |
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| * + 5-Nov | * + Special Purpose Districts | * + \**The Government Closest to the People*, read pages 235-270. |  |
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| * + 7-Nov | * + Elections   + OFF CAMPUS | * + Trip to County Auditor's Office for Observation of Vote Processing and Discussion with Auditor Julie Anderson |  |
|  |  | * + \* Leighley & Nagler (2013). Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States. Princeton University Press, 2013. Read parts of chapters 1 and 2, specifically pages 1-11 and 16-46. |  |
| * + **12-Nov** | * + **HOLIDAY: Veteran's Day** |  |  |
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| * + 14-Nov | * + School Districts   + Quiz | * + \*Readings TBA | * + Quiz |
| * + 19-Nov | * + Tribal Government: Puyallup | * + Guest Speaker Prof. Danica Miller, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies   + Readings: [Medicine Creek Treaty](https://americanindian.si.edu/static/nationtonation/pdf/Medicine-Creek-Treaty-1854.pdf). |  |
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| * + **IV. Citizenship and Government** |  |  |  |
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| * + 21-Nov | * + Initiatives, Referendums, and Recalls | * + Guest Speaker: Robin Farris, Puyallup City Council.   + Readings: TBA | * + Blog Part 3   + DUE |
| * + 26 Nov | * + Trials and Jury Duty   + May be Off Campus | * + Guest Speaker Retired Superior Judge Ron Culpepper.   + Readings: \*Vidmar and Hans (2007), "A Jury of Peers: Democratic Goals," in *American Juries*. Prometheus Books.   + \*Ross (May 30, 2016). "[How big of a difference does an all-white jury make](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/05/30/how-big-a-difference-does-an-all-white-jury-make-a-leading-expert-explains/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.121eda37a2f8)? A leading expert explains," Washington Post. |  |
| * + 28-Nov | * + Advocacy, Voice, and Writing: Rebecca Disrud, Director TLC | * + ACLU, "[Know your rights](https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_pdf_file/kyr_protests.pdf)," | * + Second Mtg   + Report Due |
|  | * + Posterboard |  |  |
| * + 3-Dec | * + Review, Posterboard |  |  |
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| * + 5-Dec | * + Elections and Running for Office: | * + Roundtable Discussion with Former UWT Students Who Have Run for office or ran campaigns: Pam Noguiera, Joe Atkinson, Blake Stagner, Anna Nepumuceno | * + Letter Due |
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| * + 7-Dec FRIDAY | * + Presentation | * + Undergraduate Showcase, Present Work | * + Poster Board   + Due |